THE JOINT ASSOCIATION OF
CLASSICAL TEACHERS' GREEK COURSE

The Teachers' Notes to *Reading Greek*

CAMBRIDGE
UNIVERSITY PRESS

PUBLISHED BY THE PRESS SYNDICATE OF THE UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE
The Pitt Building, Trumpington Street, Cambridge, United Kingdom

CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY PRESS
The Edinburgh Building, Cambridge CB2 2RU, UK http://www.cup.cam.ac.uk
40 West 20th Street, New York, NY 10011–4211, USA http://www.cup.org
10 Stamford Road, Oakleigh, Melbourne 3166, Australia
Ruiz de Alarcón 13, 28014 Madrid, Spain

First published 1986
Reprinted 1989, 1993, 1996, 2000

British Library Cataloguing in Publication data
Joint Association of Classical Teachers.
The teachers' notes to *Reading Greek*. –
(The Joint Association of Classical Teachers' Greek Course)
1. Greek language
I. Title II. Joint Association of Classical Teachers. *Reading Greek*
III. Series
488 PA258

Library of Congress Cataloguing in Publication data
Main entry under title:
The Teachers' notes to *Reading Greek*.
(The Joint Association of Classical Teachers' Greek Course)
Includes index.
1. Greek language – Study and teaching. 2. Greek language –
Grammar – 1950–. 3. Greek language – Readers. 4. *Reading Greek*.
I. *Reading Greek* II. Series
PA231.T53 1985 488.2'421 85–15147

ISBN 0 521 31872 6 paperback

Transferred to digital printing 2003

Cover illustration: detail from an Attic red-figure cup.,
Musée du Louvre G 448. *Photo*: Chuzeville

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BASIC METHODOLOGY AND LESSON PLANNING

As *GVE* explains, the first grammar section covers the *Text* of Section 1A–G. Consequently, the first task is to read and translate the *Text* of 1A–G as quickly as possible, pausing only over passages which cause difficulties, or passages which exemplify new or reinforce old grammatical points.

Methodological guidelines

Two general guidelines are important: (1) Underline or colour with a highlighting felt-tip pen those sentences, clauses, phrases or words in the *Text* which illustrate the grammatical points to be stressed by you for the students. (2) Teach *only* the grammatical points recommended in each section or sub-section of *GVE*. For example, the Course introduces only the nominative and accusative of nouns to start with. Genitive plurals come in Section 2, genitive singulars in Section 7 and datives in Section 8. If you teach genitive and dative forms ahead of time, you may confuse the learning process unnecessarily. However, if you prefer, list for students ahead of time for example the forms of the genitive and dative (especially the definite article), without going into detail about their meaning or use. Throughout the book the running vocabularies give students all the help they need to understand unusual words or constructions: i.e. they *omit* everything students should have learnt, and *include* everything which is new.

Lesson plans

A procedure for starting the Course might be as follows: Lesson 1 could cover *Text* 1A in class; home preparation would be to learn the learning vocabulary of 1A and prepare ahead 1B–C; Lesson 2 could cover translation of 1B and C, and push on into D: home preparation would consist of learning the

vocabulary of 1B–D and preparing 1E–F. And so on. During translation, the grammar of 1A–G should be pointed out and reinforced, and when the text has been translated in this way and the vocabulary learnt, turn to the grammar section for 1A–G and go through it in detail with the students, ensuring that it is understood by asking questions or drilling with simple practice exercises. The grammar must then be learnt by heart.

As for practice, the teacher should assign whichever exercises in *GVE* are judged to be necessary, supplementing these in class with brief, oral 'transformation', 'substitution' and 'expansion' exercises (see pp. 25–6). Finally, the teacher should set, or assign, the Test Exercise for translation at sight.

This is a useful general pattern for daily lesson plans and can be used with most sections. For year-plans, see pp. 204–6.

Basic format of instruction

The methodology and general lesson plan suggested should not, of course, be rigidly followed, but (1) rapid reading of the *Text*, (2) regular vocabulary drills or quizzes, and (3) appropriate exercises in the grammar are a good format for progressing through the Course.

Year-end goals

The readings in the *Text*, unlike those of many other textbooks, are numerous, culturally and grammatically full, and sometimes lengthy. Accordingly, limitations of instructional time may force the teacher to cut back the amount of *Text* which students are to cover. Because presentation of new grammar effectively ends with Section 16, this section may well end the first year. With slower groups, the teacher should aim to finish Section 13 (*Neaira*) – a sizeable (and attainable) target for those who have difficulty learning a second language. For year-plans, see pp. 204–6.

Mainly for university teachers

It may be useful to make some general remarks about the use of *RG* (which could, *mutatis mutandis*, be extended to any reading course). *RG* was written on the following principles:

1. Learning to read a language involves far more than merely memorizing grammatical rules and vocabulary words. Intuitive grasp of structure, 'feel' for the language, are as important as knowing formal grammar, and

both skills must be learnt if quick progress is to be made towards comprehending unadapted texts. Hence the long reading passages of *RG*, which not only illustrate the new grammar but also provide practice in reading continuous texts.

2. Students do not need to know every detail of Greek grammar before reading an original text.
3. Translating from Greek into English requires a different grasp of grammar from the reverse process. A grammar written for translating Greek into English can rationalize and simplify in a way which is impossible for a grammar written for translating English into Greek (consider what you need to know to teach the rules of πρίν and ἕως successfully in either case).
4. Learning a language should not be divorced from understanding the civilization which produced it. Therefore all reading is based on original Greek texts and requires constant reference to background material in *WA*.

To conclude from this, as some have done, that there is 'no grammar' in *RG* or (even more incredibly) that 'there is no need to teach grammar if you use *RG*' is to miss the whole point: namely, that 'grammar' is on the whole got by memorizing (though practice helps), and that 'feel for structure' is got by reading (though grammar helps), and that what *RG* attempts to do is to *combine both operations so that one supports and helps the other*. Thus, for example, it is extremely helpful for memorization if examples of the new forms or rules to be learnt have already been met many times in a carefully-controlled reading passage; it is extremely helpful for reading if common structures are frequently repeated using known words and constructions in a cultural context which gives them real meaning in Greek terms. To the contrary, to use *RG* to teach only grammatical structure and vocabulary is to throw away the third prop indispensable for comprehending a language – the culture of the people who used/use it. As every successful student of a modern second language knows, one can be as technically fluent as a native, but it is not until the culture is actually *experienced* in real life that one starts to speak the language idiomatically and authentically. We do no justice to the ancient Greeks or their language if we do not at least try to make the Greek experience of the ancient world our students' constant point of contact with the language. Otherwise, Ancient Greek becomes merely a dead language misused in a twentieth-century cultural context.

If teachers feel uneasy with this *entire* approach, then they should not use *RG*, because they will fight the Course rather than co-operate with it, students

will become disoriented (since teachers will say one thing, the book another), and the results will be unsatisfactory. In the case of partial disagreement, teachers may modify the Course in one way or another; e.g., they may emphasize grammar further by inventing more exercise work. But modifications should not substantially alter the basic methodology or plan of the Course, nor the pace at which it must be completed. It is all a matter of balance.

Another consideration in deciding whether, and how best, to use *RG* is the ability of your students. What is your honest assessment of them? What is their *aptitude* for learning a second language? What is their *need* to get to point X in the Course during one year (and thus their likelihood of reaching the target)? Given that it is *possible* to soft-pedal the grammar in *RG*, and to play up its high cultural content, *RG* is ideal for students whose linguistic aptitude is limited, but who are highly motivated to learn about the ancient world. Given that *RG* is wherever possible streamlined grammatically (by concentration on essentials and use of analogy), and that the *Text* encourages fast, accurate reading, it is ideal for the gifted linguist who wants to move rapidly and does not worry if some things remain unexplained to the *n*th power. On the other hand, *RG* is less likely to be successful with the perfectionist – the highly methodical learner who must know precisely where he or she is at every step.

The third crucial consideration is the time available. How many hours a week can be spent on Greek? Is it a major or minor subject? How much homework can reasonably be expected? Together with the previously-mentioned consideration, this third question will help you to arrive at a satisfactory answer to the question: How much Greek do you want students to learn in one year and what sort of grasp do you expect them to have of it? How much Greek do they actually *need*? How will *RG* help or hinder them to reach those goals? Should you think afresh about goals as a result of past experience with *RG* (or any other course)? These questions are extremely important, because in answering them you are helping to define your *goals* (in their most obvious form, an examination) and the better you can define them, the more chance you have of guiding your students towards reaching them. One approach is to consider your *ideal* end-of-year examination for a beginner in Greek, and then see which course guides you towards it best. If it contains no questions about the Greek world, puts strong emphasis on English-into-Greek and demands the ability to generate (rather than recognize) forms of, say, ἵστημι, perhaps you should not select *RG*. Such an examination, however, might cut down dramatically the number of people who could genuinely benefit from a year of Greek (and might be lured into

doing it longer) – but that is another question, though in these days its importance grows every year. (For possible examinations, see p. 186.)

Whichever answer you give, a fourth and final consideration may also play a part in formulating it: What do the students *do* next? Is one year of Greek all they will study? Will they be expected to read prose authors next year? Or to read widely in, say, Homer? Will the second year's work be a frantic gallop through 6,000 lines of Greek, or a more leisurely stroll through 3,000, with more time to appreciate the poetry and study the cultural background? How far are the first and second years' work in Greek compatible? Does *RG* suit the tone and tempo of the second year's work or not? The problem becomes all the more acute when there is a mixed class consisting of those who study Greek for one year only (obvious advantages in the broad cultural and linguistic sweep of *RG* here) and those who need to be ready for intensive reading of Aristotle for a philosophy major next year.

(For an examination which attempts to cater for the less linguistically minded, see p. 187, with discussion.)

Mainly for teachers of sixth-formers (11–12th graders)

The considerations which face university and college teachers, sketched above, tend also to face school teachers, only usually more acutely. In the United Kingdom, this is especially the case if students begin Greek in the sixth-form and wish to take an 'O'- or 'A(lternative) O'-level examination in it, or even an 'A'-level, after one or two years in the sixth-form. Such students, with perhaps three other 'A'-levels to cope with, will probably be lucky to have two hours a week in their schedule for Greek. In the United States, this is especially the case if senior high-school students are studying Greek in addition to other languages and subjects in which they will take as many as four to six different College Board Achievement examinations. Because there is no College Board in Greek, students will be likely to fit Greek into the margin of their other studies (especially of Latin, in which there *is* a College Board); for this reason, Greek in American high schools is frequently taught during breakfast or lunch periods as an 'overload', and the only national examination in Greek available to American or Canadian high-school students is the short, norm-referenced National Greek examination, sponsored by the American Classical League. Under such conditions, secondary-level students and teachers in both the U.K. and the U.S.A. need all the help they can get.

James Neville's notes should be particularly useful in pointing out the short-cuts that students can (and sometimes *must*) take. In the U.K. probably

the most useful tactic is for students taking intensive courses within a limited time to go to a summer-school or short course. A summer-school course *before* the start of the sixth-form course will bring the student to *RG* Section 9 or 10. The ground covered will need revision at the start of the first year in the sixth form, but even so, *RG* should easily be finished by the end of the first year, and in a second summer-school *WoH* and *IR* and easy texts of Homer, Plato and Greek tragedians should be assigned. This leaves the whole of the second year for the study of the books set for the 'O'-level examination. Even one summer-school can make all the difference. (For details of the special J.A.C.T. 'AO' examination in Greek, based on *WoH* and *IR*, see p. 000; for the syllabus, write to: The Secretary, Oxford and Cambridge Schools' Examination Board, Elsfield Way, Oxford OX2 8EP. For details of summer-schools and short courses for students and adults, and grants available – teachers are advised to use these courses to brush up their own Greek – write to: Dr P. V. Jones (see Preface for address).)

In the United States, at the time of writing, there are no summer-school programmes in Greek designed specifically for high-school students. Several programmes exist, however, for university and college undergraduates or for high-school teachers who have no previous knowledge of Greek or who wish to review their earlier study of it. The oldest and best known of these are the New England Classical Institute and the C.U.N.Y. Latin/Greek Institute. For further information about these institutes, write to: (N.E.C.I.), Department of Classics, Tufts University, Medford, MA 02155; (C.U.N.Y.-L/G.I.), Dept. T, City University Graduate Center, 33 West 42nd Street, New York, NY 10036. The National Greek examination, sponsored by the American Classical League, has been placed on the Advisory List of National Contests and Activities maintained by the National Association of Secondary School Principals, and this List is distributed to all secondary schools in the United States early in September. For further information, write to: Professor Edward Phinney, Department of Classics, University of Massachusetts, Amherst, MA 01003.

Another course in which *RG* can be used in the sixth-form or senior high school (given the staff and curricular space) is the General (Classical) Studies course for a term, semester or even a full year. The linguistic pace of the course can be slowed right down and heavy emphasis placed on culture, history and word-derivation (*WA* comes into its own here). With a modest linguistic goal in view (e.g. Sections 4 or 5), the teacher can work wonders. The same goes for Adult Education classes, which teachers should propose if they have not yet taught them. These classes are enormously stimulating and revivifying. Adults who feel they have missed something of great value in the

past and now wish to acquire it are an object lesson in determination, application and inquisitiveness. τοιοῦτοι εἰ πάντες γένοιντο...

Practical guidelines for all

1. *Reading and writing Greek*

It is of the highest importance, especially for weaker students, that Greek is read *aloud* and *written* as much as possible during the first month of learning the language. This may seem to slow down progress, but the rewards are immense, in accurate recognition of words and forms, in speed of learning vocabulary and general confidence in handling the language. Here are some suggestions on how to encourage reading aloud and writing.

(*a*) Read out a sentence or clause, and ask the entire class to repeat it after you; then choose smaller groups to imitate you; then individuals. (On choosing between dynamic and melodic accents, see below, pp. 10–11.) Then ask them to read another sentence or clause alone, without your prompting, after they have first prepared it; finally, ask them to read aloud at sight. Always read aloud, or have read aloud (preferably by the student about to do the translating), the Greek that is to be translated. The *Speaking Greek* cassette is invaluable for practice at home in pronunciation and accentuation (particularly in the first month, when special attention should be paid to Professor Allen's talk, on Side 1 of the cassette, 'The sounds of Greek').

(*b*) In the first month and periodically thereafter, students should write out in Greek, with diacritical marks, the passages they are translating, and, perhaps without diacritical marks, the exercises and their answers. These papers should be checked by the teacher for accuracy. It is astonishing what kinds of problem are revealed, and how easily they are cleared up, by this simple, though time-consuming, device.

2. *Grammar*

Only teach the grammatical points which *GVE* specifies as requiring to be learnt for any section. Everything lying outside that listing is glossed in the running vocabulary and can be ignored until the time comes for it to be taught fully. Underline in your text all examples of the grammatical point(s) to be learnt for each section, so that you remember to emphasize it/them and treat it/them with special care during the reading.

Some teachers prefer to give students a fuller picture of the grammar than

that specified by *GVE* at any one time (e.g. ask students to learn *all* the cases at once). The Reference Grammar at the back of *GVE* gives the *full* picture, and should be consulted if required.

3. *Definite article*

Insist that the definite article be mastered thoroughly, by heart, at the beginning. It is used generously in *RG* and gives immediately the key to case, gender and number of any noun (irrespective of type) to which it is attached. This gives much help to the student when learning noun-types.

4. *Morphology charts*

Insist on students using the morphology charts, either as they go along, meeting new forms and filling them in, or as revision, or review, sheets at the end of each section. These charts cover all morphology and contain also a principal-part sheet of the most important sixty verbs in Greek. The charts are arranged so as to encourage the students to see the connections between forms. They may prove to be a little cramped in one or two instances. Fill in just the endings if no more room is available.

James Neville recommends drawing on the blackboard or projecting from a pre-drawn overhead transparency an empty 'grid' of new forms to be met in a day's class. The grid is filled in as the forms are met in the readings and understood by the student. The forms in the grids can then be transferred to the morphology charts. (The advantage of grids on overhead transparencies is that the transparencies can be kept from day to day or even year to year and reused after being wiped off. Draw the grids with indelible inks, and fill in the forms with water-soluble ones.)

5. *WA*

Contains full cross-references to *RG* in an Appendix. Constant reference is made to *WA* throughout these *Notes*.

6. *Vocabularies*

Constantly check that students are learning at every point the vocabularies set in *GVE* to be learnt. The result will be a much greater confidence in translating and a considerable saving of time.

Peter V. Jones
Edward Phinney